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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused November 26-27 news coverage on the controversy surrounding animated news stories launched by Taiwan's mass-circulation "Apple Daily" newspaper and on the campaigns for Taiwan local elections scheduled for December 5. Concerning editorials and commentaries, remarks by American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) Chairman Raymond Burghardt, who visited Taiwan to brief Taiwan officials and opposition leaders, remain a topic of discussion. Although a column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" said the failure to mention the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) and the reiteration of the "respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity" in the Sino-U.S. statement had great impact on Taiwan, it still praised Burghardt's efforts to clarify Taiwan's confusion about the Sino-U.S. statement released by Chinese President Hu Jintao and President Obama. An editorial in "Apple Daily" reiterated the significance of United States' arms sales to Taiwan even though it seems to be more difficult for Taiwan to buy weapons from the United States, judging from Burghardt's remarks and President Obama's trip to China. A column in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" echoed Burghardt's remarks that the language in the Sino-U.S. statement - "respect for each other's territorial integrity" - does not apply to Taiwan. An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" criticized remarks by President Obama and Burghardt's remarks as "not respecting the fact that Taiwan is now a fully democratic state and the right of the 23 million Taiwan people to have the final power to decide Taiwan's future." End summary.

A) "The Impact of the Obama-Hu Jintao Statement"

Columnist Norman Fu wrote in his column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 120,000] (11/27):

"... The impact of the statement between President Obama and President Hu Jintao lies in the failure to mention the 'Taiwan Relations Act' and the reiteration of 'respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.' ...

"Remarks by [American Institute in Taiwan Chairman] Raymond Burghardt, who said 'respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity' referred to Tibet and Xinjiang and had nothing to do with Taiwan, were somewhat surprising. However, Burghardt gave those remarks with certainty at a press conference and because the information was from [senior director for East Asian Affairs at the U.S. National Security Council] Jeffrey Bader and [U.S. Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs] Kurt Campbell, who were the two experts accompanying U.S. President Obama on his visit to China, you cannot help believing in the remarks. However, we cannot totally believe [in what he said], at least not as long as it is only the United States saying this unilaterally. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) definitely would not agree with or accept [the U.S. characterization of this] and we can only accept the U.S. view on this for the time being. ...

"In general, Burghardt's trip to Taiwan to brief on [President Obama's visit to China] was timely. [Burghardt's] clarification and

explanation regarding the confusion was also clear and decisive. Different from U.S. diplomats' habitual practice of double-speak, [Burghardt's] performance was worth praising."

B) "The Symbolism of Arms Procurement"

The mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] editorialized (11/26):

"American Institute in Taiwan Chairman Raymond Burghardt said the United States' policy on arms sales to Taiwan remains unchanged and the United States will continue evaluating arms sales in the future.

"Judging from President Obama's trip to China and Burghardt's very official-style remarks, we feel that it is more and more difficult for Taiwan to procure arms from the United States. If we have the chance to buy high-tech weapons, we should proceed as quickly as possible to buy them. Reasons that it is more and more difficult for Taiwan to buy arms [from the United States] are as follows, including: the United States cares more and more about China's feeling; Obama has a weak personality and has no interest in the security of Taiwan; the Ma Ying-jeou administration does not believe that the threat of China is either substantive or obvious and imminent; as a result the Ma administration is not active in procuring arms; the defense budget, which will suffer from an increasing deficit after implementing a policy of voluntary military service, will be insufficient to procure expensive weapons; the Taiwan government and [Taiwan] military have many Chinese friends and there are many spies. The United States is worried that secrets of the high-tech weapons will be passed to China.

"Arms procurement from the United States has significant symbolism.

It means that substantial military contact between the United States and Taiwan will not be interrupted. It means that Taiwan is still in the national interest of the United States in the West Pacific.

...

"In peacetime, the implications of this symbolism are very important. It is a psychological mechanism to deter conflicts. Taiwan does not need to buy the first-class weapons such as F-35 fighter jets or Aegis ships. They are not only too expensive but the U.S. will also not agree to sell them [to Taiwan]. The symbolic implications of procuring second-class weapons will be enough. They [the second-class weapons] will be able to maintain equilibrium between the military powers on the both sides of the Taiwan Strait."

C) "No Change in U.S. Taiwan Policy"

Columnist William Fang wrote in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] (11/27):

"... Diplomacy is an art where often what is not said is more important than what is said and what is done is more important than what is said. In the statement issued jointly by Obama and Hu, the stress of respect of each other's territorial integrity easily touched on the nerves of Taiwan as it might mean that America agreed that Taiwan 'is an integral part of China.' But, as we go on reading the document, we will realize that the U.S. recognized Tibet, not Taiwan, as part of China. ...

"Just as [American Institute in Taiwan Chairman Raymond] Burghardt put it when commenting on the Obama-Hu joint statement, 'if we insisted (referring to including the TRA), we wouldn't have the joint statement. That's sort of understandable.' [sic - Director Stanton actually said this] What Taiwan should really be concerned about is not what the U.S. says, but whether it continues to fulfill its obligation to provide necessary weapons in defense of the island as required by the TRA."

D) "Obama's Messenger Needs Taiwan Democracy Lessons"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (11/26):

"American Institute in Taiwan Chairman Raymond Burghardt arrived

Sunday to deliver assurances from U.S. President Barack Obama that Washington's policy toward Taiwan had not changed despite the statement of 'respect' given by the U.S. to the 'sovereignty and territorial integrity' of the authoritarian People's Republic of China and the lack of mention of the critical Taiwan Relations Act of 1979.

"However, Washington's messenger failed to provide reassurance on the most fundamental issue, namely whether the new Democratic president will 'respect' the fact that Taiwan is now a fully democratic state and whether Obama will 'respect' the fundamental right of the 23 million Taiwan people to have the final power to decide their future, including the shape of future relations with the PRC. ...

"Beijing will undoubtedly use U.S.-China Joint Statement's affirmation of Washington's 'respect' for 'China's sovereignty and integrity' in the world media as confirmation of its own claim of ownership over Taiwan. ...

"Even more worrying is Washington's evident lack of 'respect' for the fact that Taiwan is a democratic society and for the fundamental human rights, including the right of self-determination, of the Taiwan people. The AIT chairman manifested his disrespect for Taiwan's democracy by incorrectly and insultingly characterizing citizen opposition to the October 22 protocol to open Taiwan's market to high-risk ground beef, beef on bone and offals as a 'phony issue.'

"But far more worrisome was Burghardt's statement Tuesday evening that Washington maintains that the disputes between the PRC and Taiwan should be resolved through 'peaceful means' and 'with the assent of the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. This formula of 'dual assent,' which appeared in the middle of the Bush administration's eight years, marked a dramatic and dangerous retreat from the position articulated by former Democratic president Bill Clinton on February 24, 2000 that 'issues between Taiwan and China should be resolved peacefully' and 'with the assent of the people of Taiwan.' ...

"Obama has an obligation to publically reassure both the Taiwan people and the world community that Washington does not include Taiwan in its expression of 'respect' for the PRC's sovereignty, that his administration will not retreat on its obligations under the TRA and that his administration will uphold the principle that

differences between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait must be resolved peacefully and 'with the assent of the Taiwan people' alone."

STANTON